2: Pineda Giraldo--9 E-6 (1947) 1950 BC13 Guajiro BC13

[8 cont.]

now present it embodied under the title Aspectos de la Magia en la Guajira, a title which not only covers what has been known as magic to the Indian but also many of his mental and sentimental attitudes, the classification of which would be difficult in any other way. [9] [Maps of La Guajira Continued on p. 8. Page 10 is blank.]

[11] II

Life Cycle of the Guajiro Shaman

Symptomatology. A woman shaman [piache], referring to the bodily symptoms which presented themselves as an indication of her calling, mentioned the following: She began to see before her eyes a kind of little mat which fell upon her in the manner of a golden rain, the first sign, according to her, of her person being possessed by a spirit. Her sight became clouded, and she fell to the ground in a faint; she remained stretched out there for some time. Then she very slowly regained consciousness. After this first attack of possession, she felt quite well for two or three days, after which she woke up one morning with a sensation of intense cold such as one feels at the beginning of an attack of malaria; she also broke out in a sticky sweat all over her body; then she was overcome, vomited blood, and remained unconscious until afternoon, lying like one dead in her hammock. She began to recover again, and the spirit came down to her, for she seemed to hear a voice that ordered her, "Eat manilla (2), for if

2. A tobacco paste imported by the natives from Ríohacha (Colombia) or from Maracaibo (Venezuela).

you do not, you will die." On receiving this order, she immediately told her relatives to bring her manilla, and one of them went with a gold necklace of hers to look for an old woman shaman that she might come to see if our informant had a spirit and, if it were true,

[11 cont.]

might dedicate herself to her teaching. The woman shaman called for the purpose recognized at once that our informant had the spirit appropriate to her calling and began the tutelage of the new curer [curandera].

Another woman shaman narrated the first symptoms of her vocation in this way. When she had reached the age of reason, that is, about ten or eleven years of age (the time of the initiation for the change from girl to young woman, the beginning of puberty), she felt one day a need to perform a bodily function. She went into the woods to do this, but no matter how much she tried she was unable to do it. This situation repeated itself several times. At night she dreamed that a spirit descended and, taking her by the hand, led her to a stream where there was a big field of plantain and ahoyama. At sunrise the next day [12] she woke up depressed and trembling. She heard a voice in her ear saying, "Eat mantilla and mercira (3)." She frequently lost

3. A plant with a leaf similar to that of tobacco.

consciousness and when she came to again was weak and trembling. When she ate what was ordered, the shivering and feeling of illness disappeared as if by enchantment, and she remained in perfect health. She was going to be a shaman. Her mother, who was already one, announced this fact and prepared to begin her training according to the rules.

From the personal statements of these two shamans which we have just reported and from other relative data that we have been able to obtain by word of mouth from other informants, we can deduce the following: 1) The graduation to the rank of shaman (the illumination, we might better call it) are revelations of the wamurí ("spirit of death") which enters the body of certain persons chosen by it, that they may exercise the office of curer magician. As a proof of the presence of the spirit in new shamans through manifestations of revelation, we may see among the Sharanahua tribe of Brazil, for example, how the spirit appears in the shape of a monkey or water hog (4), and among the

4. Métraux, Alfred. Le Chamanisme chez les Indiens de l'Amérique du Sud Tropicale

[13 cont.]

*756 964 With respect to the hysterical attacks so characteristic of shamans, there exists considerable confirmation of this in a fact which is connected with the death of these curers. Custom demands that when one of them dies, it is essential that their wake be kept for three consecutive days and nights, because as these attacks occur frequently and at times last for a considerable time, there is a fear that the shaman may not be really dead and that consequently he may be buried alive if the mourners do not wait for a reasonable time to see if he recovers.

*756 276 3) A magic plant, tobacco, is involved in the making of a new shaman in two ways: (a) The aspiring shaman must chew it for several consecutive days in order to enter into a state of ecstasy and so provoke the absorption of the spirit by his person. One must remember that at the moment the initiate has an attack, a piece of tobacco or manilla is put into his mouth. When [827] he recovers consciousness, he belches loudly because of the action of the tobacco, and these belches are considered to be canticles of praise and gratitude to the spirit which desires to reside in him. The establishment of relations between the spirit and the medicine-man aspirant by means of a magic plant, such as the tobacco we [171] have referred to, is found also among the Conibo: "The apprentice shaman of the Conibo of the Ucayali receives his medical science from a spirit. To enter into communication with the latter, the shaman drinks a decoction of tobacco and smokes as much as he can in a hermetically sealed hut." (8) [Cited in French.]

8. Métraux. Op. cit., 204.

*756 787 (b) The diviner must see in the different changes in the embers of the tobacco whether the individual whose future he foretells after an attack of illumination will become a true shaman or not. His verdict is final.

4) Dreams, or at least hallucinations, are decisive factors in the determination of the quality of shaman.

*756 5) The vocation of shaman cannot be renounced. Better said, it does not depend upon the individual himself; once the symptoms have appeared and the diviner has given a favorable

171 [19 cont.]
+756 invocations of the spirits and in the metamorphosis of the shaman."
755 (16) [Cited in French.] The shaman moves his torso in gyra-

16. Ibid., I, 218.

tion. When he is in trance and effecting a cure which requires the invocation of the spirit, no noise must be made as this will cause the spirit to become frightened and to flee; and being left without his protector spirit, the shaman will suffer violent
[276] fits and fall to the ground in severe convulsions. The shaman always carries a piece of manilla in these cases; he chews it and becomes intoxicated with the juice, which induces him to sing with greater verve. The juice of the manilla also serves to spray
[824] the body of the patient as well as the walls and all around the house to frighten away the malignant spirit. This custom of the magic use of tobacco is also very common in America; not to overexpand the subject we limit ourselves to giving a simple example cited by Pauly with reference to the Araona Indians of Bolivia: "They use tobacco dust mixed with coca to cure their sick and ward off the evil spirits, chewing it and spitting the juice on the body of the sick person. They also spit it at the heavens to calm the storms and at the river when it is in flood." (17)

[113]

17. Pauly, Antonio. Ensayo de Etnografía Americana. Viajes y Exploraciones [Essay on American Ethnology. Voyages and Explorations], VI, 128.

755 The treatment really begins with a chant of invocation to the spirits. While the ceremony is performed the shaman continually chews tobacco and he rubs the juice formed by the saliva and the juice of the plant over the body of the patient; and immediately after this, he energetically sucks several consecutive times at the affected parts of the body of the sick man to draw
[753] out [20] the malignancy. (The sickness that the native has, no matter what may be its special characteristics or from whence it may have arisen, is derived from the malevolent action of the

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

123
142
291
276
372

Left: *I help an old man, who had never seen matches, to light his cigar*

142
291

Chinca, a girl of simple family, (on the left) and a well-born maiden expensively perfumed in a white tunic

[516]

Indian camp and a mestizo

[Facing p. 49]

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

CHAPTER 10

Conjuration of Spirits

How does one become a piache? Not of one's own volition. Those worthy are chosen by the spirits and receive their summons in a supernatural way. The wanuru spirit itself visits the chosen one, who may be a boy or a girl. Women are often sorcerers in Guajira. One of them gave us this account of how she received her summons.

First she saw in front of her eyes a fall of shooting-stars, a rain of gold; then everything went dark and she sank to the ground. The first warning usually comes like that. Some days later she had violent attacks of shivering, cold sweats and vomiting. As she lay in her hammock more dead than alive, she heard a voice say: 'Eat manilla or you will die.' (Manilla is a kind of chewing tobacco which the Indians now obtain from white traders, but in default they have recourse to tobacco leaves. The spirit always orders the person to chew manilla.)

The woman's relations hastened to get some manilla and at the same time sent for a piache, who would have to decide whether the girl really had received a call or not.

Another woman told us that her first symptom was thoroughly prosaic: constipation. During the night she dreamed that the spirit came and led her by the hand to a big plantation. She awoke trembling, but then heard a voice ordering her to eat manilla. By chewing tobacco she recovered completely. Her mother, who was herself a piache, at once began instructing her in her profession.

After the summons comes the apprenticeship. The magical tobacco seems of great significance for the medicine man or woman to be, and even for the fully trained. The

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

756 787 276 medicine men of South America make great use of tobacco, and at first it was mostly reserved for them. The chewing of tobacco can cause an intoxication, through which a magician can put himself into a state of ecstasy. Of course, the nicotine has a violent effect on the children whom the spirit orders to eat manilla, and it is not easy to say whether the symptoms accompanying the summons are due to abuse of tobacco or to other infirmity. It is said that those called to be piache always fall ill. The Indians are fully convinced that dreams have significance for their actions. While asleep they receive instructions which they seldom dare fail to carry out. The youth or girl who is summoned receives his or her revelation either in dreams or while in a hysterical state. The Indians consider them to be possessed by the spirit, and the piache for whom they send then has to decide whether the spirit really has visited the boy or girl, or not. If it is not possible to fetch a piache immediately, they will sometimes have to make do with a sooth-sayer, an *outschi*, who though not a proper medicine man, at least can 'smoke tobacco', that is to say, can foretell future happenings, find strayed animals, etc. They are often well patronized. The outschi swings a firebrand in the air while puffing at a cigar—magical tobacco again!—and the trails of smoke tell him what he wishes to know. He can merely confirm that there has been a true revelation, that the spirit visited the young person and entered into him or her. A sooth-sayer can go no further than that, but that gives the parents the comforting assurance that the piache, who has to be summoned in any event, will not come in vain. The piache has no objection to a sooth-sayer making a diagnosis.

[766] The attacks from which the candidate suffers both at his selection and when he becomes fully qualified, lead to a trancelike state. It is characteristic that a dead piache may not be buried until after three days and nights, so that it is quite certain that he is dead and not just that his soul happens to be away. A cataleptic state and hallucinations are characteristic of future and practising medicine men alike.

There is no avoiding the call to be a piache once it has

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

been confirmed by sooth-sayer and piache. The person selected must learn the profession and practise it. Otherwise, certain death awaits him, for the spirit will not suffer his decisions to be neglected.

Often parents cannot afford to send for a piache, for those who convey the request have to give him a necklace of gold beads. This may mean that the novice's family has to ask well-to-do relatives to pay the fee. When he arrives, the piache examines the candidate and stuffs some manilla into his or her mouth. When he sees that it is beginning to take effect, he intones a monotonous song. As soon as he stops, the novice must proclaim his desire to become a piache and have it granted. He is selected by the spirit, but he does not yet know anything. The apprenticeship then begins.

The piache shuts himself into a suitable hut together with the novice, and there they must stay, hidden from the world, for a month or more. The apprentice is not supposed to be seen by anyone during this time. No one may go in and interrupt the seance. The piache sits on his stool of light wood shaped like an animal. He wears a head-dress made of wool and places a similar one on the novice's head. He then begins singing songs, swinging rattles and making all the gestures, movements and conjurations that he uses to call upon and move the spirits. His instruction continues day after day, sometimes by night as well. He has to keep to a certain diet. Roast maize in particular is usually prescribed. Now and again spirits appear and talk with the novice, encouraging him, not least by expounding how great are the advantages of being a piache, and how rich the presents he receives.

One day the spirit announces that the first period of instruction is over and the novice ready for examination. This is an intermediary examination, for the instruction is not complete. So far it has only included spells and magical songs, and the novice has no knowledge of herbs and poisons. (Knowledge of medicinal herbs is common to all by family tradition.) The songs, gestures and spells have been repeated till the novice knows them all perfectly.

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

756 During this period of confinement the novice is always having to chew tobacco, and it is during periods of nicotine-[776] intoxication that the spirits appear to him. After his first examination the novice is given a diadem and a rattle, *maraca*, as symbols of his new dignity.

The novice's family must now arrange a dance and sacri-[535] fice sheep or goats. A chichamaya is performed during one or two days and nights. Those taking part are ceremoniously painted. The animals are slaughtered and offered to the spirits who partake of them during the night. After that the dancers can eat. No one, however, may touch the meat till [782] it has lain, wrapped in leaves, at the spirits' disposition and thereafter been dedicated by the piache, who spits tobacco juice upon it and pronounces spells over it.

The apprenticeship, of course, is not over, and again the novice is shut away from the world. Now comes a period of instruction in the art of chewing tobacco, that is to say, how, where and when that is to be done and what are correct ways to summon spirits, cure illness, make rain, protect cattle, halt epidemics and much more that the medicine man may be called upon to do. The instructing piache transfers his spirit to the apprentice, and exhorts the former not to start by trying to cure adults, but to practise on children. The spirit also forbids erotic association.

After a few months the apprentice will be ready to qualify. Large quantities of maize beer are then prepared and invitations sent out.

756 While the guests are drinking and dancing the novice 787 sits, still isolated, practising. The spirit comes and orders him or her to send for a beast of certain colour and with specific markings, which is to be sacrificed to the spirit. When that has been done, and it must be done, the spirit demands some necklaces of gold beads—any number up to ten—which have to be hung up in the novice's hut. As soon as these have been collected with the help of relatives—often as a loan—the spirit pronounces himself satisfied and informs them that the novice's apprenticeship is over. He or [833] she can now begin to practise. But, the spirit adds, there

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

that prevents his own from being shed—and after this a chichamaya dance is arranged.

It is not only through dreams that future events can be foretold. There are special sooth-sayers: we have already mentioned the outschi, who deal in prophecy without being piaches. Many real piaches also deal in prognostication, but that is not really their province. The Indians believe in the piache, more than in the ordinary sooth-sayer. 'The piache is always right', they say.

In divination the sooth-sayer also uses a firebrand that he swings through the air, or a lighted cigarette or, sometimes, a knife-edge along which he stares. Whatever the method, the sooth-sayer's spirit has to free itself and go roaming. Let us say that he is to track down a stolen cow. The freed spirit follows its path till it finds it and can say whither it has been taken. As I said, a piache will not treat a patient if he is sure that he is incurable. He often finds out about this by using a firebrand. If it goes out, there is no hope. Sooth-sayers most carefully study the different shapes assumed by the coals, which, to the initiated, are significant.

As with us, there are many amateurs, especially elder women, who try to foretell the future or discover what others are about. Suppose such a woman wants to know where her husband, who is on a journey, is and how he is faring. She takes a cigar of the primitive kind they use there, lights it and pronounces an incantation, asking to be shown what she wishes to know. If the ash turns black, her husband has fallen seriously ill, if the red part splutters it means that he will get gold, that is money. Other signs will reveal that he has associated with some other woman. That can involve the husband in considerable trouble when he returns.

Medicine men have a number of guardian or assistant spirits who advise them, but who also require remuneration for their services. They also warn the medicine men against enemies. Every piache has seven or eight such spirits, each of which is invoked with a special song. The rain demon, Mareiwa, is called in song under the name Fumayule, while

8:Armstrong & Métraux E-4 (no date) 1948
SC13 Goajiro SC13

273 method the maize is finely pulverized by hammering on a flat stone, instead of being masticated. Beer is drunk in large quantities, as is rum received by trade.

276 Both sexes commonly smoke long narrow cigarettes, which the women make of bundles of 8 or 10 leaves. Formerly, at least in the western portion of the country, the *Goajiro* chewed coca (hayo) with lime, which stained their teeth black. Coca is still grown, but there is no mention of this custom in recent times.

RELIGION

776 *Goajiro* religion is imperfectly known. Mareigua (Maleiwa) seems to have been the Creator and Culture Hero. He caused the first *Goajiro* to emerge from the ground and taught the tribe how to produce fire with a drill. He saved them during the flood by raising the Cerro Pororo where they had taken refuge and by driving the jaguars away. As a Supreme Being he shows some moral preoccupation, in the past having punished those who lived in incest. He sends rain and all the good things which the *Goajiro* expect from nature (Hernández de Alba, 1936, p. 44).

Yoluha (Yorja) has been thought to signify the god of thunder, lightning, and drought, but the term probably does not designate a single deity but bad spirits or ghosts in general. These are feared at night when 776 the sky is clouded; to prevent their inroads the *Goajiro* stretch a thin cord 789 between two poles reaching above the roof. They attach to this cord, at regular intervals, fishhooks which serve to entangle the Yoluha and make their stay unpleasant. Sometimes when sounds coming from the bush are thought to have been made by spirits, the Indians light embers and throw stones at them.

787 The *Goajiro* give considerable importance to dreams. A dream may 438 cause the desertion of a camp, a war, or a consultation with a shaman. The *Goajiro* carry charms which they buy from shamans.

SHAMANISM

756 *Goajiro* shamans (piache) are of both sexes. Aside from their long hair shamans differ little in external appearance from ordinary persons, but their power is reputed to be considerable and people avoid offending them. They are said to cause the heart of a person to stop beating unless they are paid enough.

A shaman keeps his cures secret and divulges them only to a successor, who undergoes a long period of training and who pays his instructor a certain number of cattle. When the training is complete, there is a public initiation with dancing and drinking, at which the novice is seized by fits as demonstration of his new power. The instructor chants spells